



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the sugar beet industry has played a significant role in the agricultural history of Colorado, particularly in the twentieth century, when it became the most important agricultural activity in the state; and

WHEREAS, area farmers relied on sugar beets as a vital cash crop, necessitating the labor of thousands of nonunionized fieldworkers to meet the demands of each harvest; and

WHEREAS, the successful cultivation of sugar beets required intense labor, leading farmers and sugar companies to actively recruit Mexican and Chicano workers, who became an integral part of the agricultural workforce in Colorado; and

WHEREAS, by the late 1920s, the sugar beet industry had become the largest employer of Hispanics in Colorado, with these individuals performing essential, yet often overlooked, labor that contributed significantly to the prosperity of the industry; and

WHEREAS, the hard work and dedication of these laborers, including families of all ages, who toiled from sunup to sundown, were instrumental in establishing Colorado as the largest sugar-producing state in the United States by 1909; and

WHEREAS, the use of the short-handled hoe, a standard tool in sugar beet cultivation, became a symbol of the exploitative working conditions faced by agricultural laborers, leading to long-term physical consequences for many; and

WHEREAS, the efforts of organizations such as the United Farm Workers have brought attention to these injustices, culminating in the outlawing of the short-handled hoe in 1975 and it is essential to honor and recognize the contributions of ALL those who labored in the sugar beet fields, acknowledging their vital role in shaping Colorado's agricultural landscape and history.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jeni Arndt, Mayor of the City of Fort Collins, do hereby proclaim October 9th as

THE HAND THAT FEEDS DAY

in recognition of the invaluable contributions of ALL agricultural laborers in the sugar beet industry and to honor their legacy of hard work, resilience, and determination. I encourage all residents of Fort Collins to reflect on the history of agricultural labor in our community and to celebrate the contributions of those who have worked tirelessly to feed our state and nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and the seal of the City of Fort Collins this 1st day of October 2024.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk